May 31, 2017

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary of Commerce
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20240

Subject: Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee Re-authorization and Meeting Request

Dear Secretary Ross and Secretary Zinke:

I am writing on behalf of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee. By law, the committee must be reauthorized by September 30, 2017, to continue our work, which contributes to the economic and environmental vitality of our country. We respectfully request that you urge the President to re-authorize this volunteer committee in advance of the deadline.

Our mandate is to provide expert advice to the Departments of Commerce and the Interior to increase the efficiency and efficacy of marine protected areas. The committee provides benefits to the nation by:

- Representing diverse constituencies from across the country, including industry and nongovernment representatives, small business owners, commercial and recreational fishermen, tourism professionals, educators, academics, state and tribal leaders, and informed members of the public;

- Producing timely, actionable strategies requested by both Departments that support the economic and ecological prosperity of the nation, such as our recent reports on innovative financing for MPAs and on connecting MPAs for greater effectiveness (see other products at http://marineprotectedareas.noaa.gov/fac/products/); and

- Providing opportunities for public input on a broad suite of issues, including coastal and homeland security, local and regional industry development, food security, human health, and living and non-living marine resources.
Marine Protected Areas
Federal Advisory Committee

We request to meet with you to discuss the critical role our committee plays regarding balanced and informed approaches to the planning and management of U.S. marine protected areas.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this request. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Brian Baird
Chair, Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee

cc.
Ben Friedman, Performing the duties of Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere
W. Russell Callender, Assistant Administrator, NOAA
Lauren Wenzel, Designated Federal Official, NOAA